

Funding for the Ball State University Singers

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

This paper explores the history of the Ball State University Singers, focusing on their intended purpose to represent the spirit of the University to the rest of the world (Ball State, 2016) and their history of international outreach. The paper goes on to note that funding for such opportunities is diminishing and other fundraising events need to be considered. The paper outlines the research and data collection involved in creating fundraising ideas. The fundraising events of hosting a 5K race, an alumni auction, and a cast chili cook-off are presented, with the inclusion of a budget of expenses and resources to optimize the success of each event.

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Authors Statement

The spring before my freshman year of college at Ball State University, I auditioned for a choral ensemble known as the Ball State University Singers. A few weeks after my audition, I received an email letting me know that I had been offered a spot in the cast that fall. This email was followed by information about applying for a passport, as University Singers had planned a trip of performances in China that coming November, and I would be traveling internationally for the first time.

The Singers trip to China was one of the most memorable parts of my four years in the organization, marked by culture shock, exotic food, and cast bonding. It opened my eyes up to a new culture and new experiences. The trip furthered my love of international exchanges and inspired me to see more of the world.

Since the 2012 trip to China, the organization has only been able to participate in limited travel due to lack of funding. With many organizations requesting funds from the University for travel expenses, all available money has to be spread out as evenly and equally as possible. The problem is compounded as funding for fine arts organizations – even those in educational institutions – decreases each and every year. The question then becomes “How do we address the expanding gap in funding for our organization?” The obvious answer is to generate a greater income for the organization, which is very much in line with the entrepreneurial endeavors that Ball State University encourages among its faculty and students. In this thesis, I have attempted to answer this question by presenting fundraising ideas that have proven successful for other organizations. I want future generations of Singers to have a travel experience with the organization that offers them new opportunities and provides the University with a new

audience. I hope that the cast will carry out the fundraising ideas found in this thesis the next time they are invited to perform on an international stage.

Funding for the Ball State University Singers

Introduction

Over 50 years ago in 1964, John R. Emens, President of Ball State Teachers College wrote a letter to Dr. Robert Hargreaves, the director of the Department of Music about the interest of developing a choral organization to represent Ball State at various meetings, dinner parties, club groups, and other social functions. A faculty meeting of the Music Department voted for the organization to be launched with the Winter Quarter. The proposed title of this group was "University Singers." The intended purpose of the University Singers was to "represent the progressive spirit of the new Ball State University to the world" (Ball State, 2016). They were, essentially, a form of recruitment and outreach for the University through their performances.

In the last fifty-two years, University Singers has performed throughout the United States, as well as areas of the world such as Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, Newfoundland, Latvia, Poland, U.S.S.R., Romania, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and China (Ball State, 2016). However, in the last ten years of the organization, the only international trip taken has been to China. This is not to say that University Singers has not been asked to represent Ball State University abroad, as just this year the cast was invited to perform in Italy and Hungary. These trips were unable to be carried out due to lack of finances and funding. The thesis that follows outlines fundraising events that could help offset the cost of international outreach opportunities for the Ball State University Singers.

Methodology

Before diving into this thesis, many questions had to be asked. The first being, what are the needs of the organization? Collecting data to answer this question was mainly done through correspondence with the director/producer of the organization, Dr. Alan Alder. While he was able to highlight many outstanding needs, funding for travel and outreach purposes seemed to be one of the more pressing needs, as invitations for performance opportunities abroad were presenting themselves to the organization. Upon reviewing the travel history of the organization, it was clear that international outreach had diminished greatly over the last several years. A deeper look at the organization's budget revealed that the current funds being generated were only able to cover the current expenses of the organization, and that any additional fees, such as travel, would need to be addressed in other ways.

Once a need of the organization was identified, kinds of fundraisers the organization would be able to carry out successfully had to be determined. Reviewing lists of special events including dinners, auctions, fairs, concerts, tournaments, tours, and sales, helped generate numerous proposals that could potentially increase the organization's funds. The next question to consider was what available resources the organization had that could best support these fundraisers. Data was collected by communicating with Ball State University's Student Government Association to identify possible supports offered to all University organizations, as well as University Singers specifically. Individual research was also done to determine what community systems could help the organization. Various businesses and potential sponsorships were identified. Ball State University facilities that could be used for fundraising events were researched and individuals overseeing these facilities were contacted to clarify regulations of

these spaces. After examining this data and the strengths of the organization, the list of potential fundraisers could be narrowed down.

The final step involved in the data collection process was to review the outcomes that these fundraisers had produced through other organizations. Researching the budgets of other organization and contacting individuals who had hosted similar events helped establish how profitable certain events would be. From this data, three profitable and practical fundraisers were developed.

Hosting a Race

As a runner, I know that the running community in Indiana is rather large. I also know that hosting a race is a great way to make quick money for an organization. I believe that University Singers could generate a lot of income by hosting a 5K race. Registration fees for 5K's vary greatly based on how early participants register for the event, and who is benefiting from the event. Participants can expect to pay \$10-\$30 for a 5K event (Determining, 2011; Flaws, 2016). Assuming that 100 people register for the 5K, an organization could bring in \$1,000-\$3,000 in registration fees.

There are two big things to consider when hosting this kind of an event that determines the success of the event. The first is advertising. If the event is not advertised well, people will not register for it. Advertising should be done not only on campus to Ball State students through email, fliers, and social media, but also to the rest of the community. There are many effective ways to promote running events to the general public. Some races will let others put fliers in their race bags, or let them set up a booth at their event to advertise for an upcoming race. Another great place to advertise for the event is at local running stores. This can be done by hanging up posters, or asking the business owner to put fliers up at the front registers (Race

Entry, 2014). Many local businesses are typically willing to hang up fliers and even help sponsor running events. If a business is willing to sponsor the race, the organization hosting the race can find ways to advertise for these businesses on the day of the race. For example, one of the races I ran last summer was sponsored by SUBWAY®. After participants finished the race, they were offered free food from SUBWAY®. Putting sponsor's logos on the back of t-shirts is another way to advertise for sponsors. There are also race websites like www.runningintheusa.com that will allow organizations to list their race details and a link to register for their event. This is how many Indiana runners find out about upcoming races.

To increase event participation, many organizations host themed races. Themed races tend to draw in crowds of people that do not consider themselves to be runners, but register for the race because it is an experience (Race Entry, 2014). Hosting a themed race can also give direction to event advertising. It can be challenging to create a flier or handout for an event when the only known details are the event date, time, and location. However, your creative team will be able to structure the advertisement of a themed event with much more ease, as specific color schemes and pictures become more obvious choices in design.

Another extremely important factor to consider is the actual organization of the event itself. If the event is not well organized, it will reflect badly on University Singers, and it is likely that future events would be poorly attended. It is crucial to make sure that there are no scheduling conflicts for the event. If it is held on Ball State's campus, the University Police Department will need to be notified and traffic will need to be stopped for runners at every intersection of traffic that the course travels through. Things like parking and the use of public restrooms (or renting portable toilets) will need to be considered. Information about parking should be given out during registration, or in an event reminder email a few days prior to the

event. It is also extremely important to have medical presence during the race in the event that someone would need it. Water stops along the way (typically at the one- and two-mile marks) are a good way to help make runners feel like they are being taken care of during the race. There will also need to be online registration, as well as in-person registration the day of the event. According to Race Entry, an online race registration website, “runners prefer a simple and clean registration process free of distracting content... When consumers are required to click through more pages, you get more dropouts (2014).” Online registration for this event should be created around one year prior to the event date so that runners can register early for the race.

It is almost a given that every runner will be given a t-shirt that is included as part of their registration fee. It is important to keep in mind that the number of race participants can increase dramatically just days before the event. Try to find a printing company that is willing to commit to adjusting an order last-minute (Race Entry, 2014). Many races also provide complimentary goody bags with snacks, a bottle of water, and other items from sponsors. Post-race music and food keep the event lively and fun! Official running bibs are a must, and offering plaques and/or medallions is another great way to bring in more participants.

Hosting a race is by no means a fundraiser that can be thrown together last minute. There is a great deal of planning and preparation involved. It is considered to be an “all hands on deck” event that would require the participation of the entire University Singers cast, and potentially family, friends, and/or alumni. However, this event could generate a large return in profit and would be well worth the work it takes to host!

Budget of Expenses

There are many expenses to consider when planning a race and writing up a budget for the event. Many of the items listed in the budget below could be donated through sponsorship,

while everything else would need to be covered by registration fees. This budget outlines the costs for a race with 100 runners. Resources and contact information for hosting a 5K race at Ball State University can be found in Appendix A.

Item	Amount Needed	Unit Price	Total
Advertising materials (handouts, fliers, etc.)	100	\$0.35	\$35
T-shirts	100	\$7	\$700
Race certification	1	\$30	\$30
Running bibs	100	\$0.20	\$20
Food/water	100	\$3	\$300
Goody bags	100	\$3	\$300
Medals	10*	\$6	\$60
Event insurance	1	\$300	\$300
Event signs	16	\$6.81	\$109

* Number will vary depending on number of awards chosen to give out.

Timeline

Twelve months prior to race: Book event with the event coordinator of the race route; create online registration for the event; design advertising materials

Nine months prior to race: Order advertising materials

Six months prior to race: Reach out to community businesses for donations and sponsorship; heavily advertise for the event; order running bibs and mile-marker signs

Four months prior to race: Start organizing volunteers for event; have course measured and marked by USATF

Three months prior to race: Contact police department if event crosses through traffic; contact medical personnel

Two months prior to race: Place t-shirt order

One month prior to race: Send sponsors a reminder email or letter about what they have agreed to contribute to the event

One week prior to race: Send reminder email out to all registers runners with information about parking, special event features, and basic details about the race (time, location, prizes, etc.); send reminder email to all volunteers with more specifics about their duties and responsibilities before, during, and after the event

Three days prior to event: Organize all volunteers to assemble packets and goody bags for event; talk through volunteer's responsibilities with them and run through flow of the event

Day of event: Show up at least one hour prior to start of Day of Registration; check all facilities (restrooms, doors unlocked and electricity turned on); touch base with medical personnel and police department; set up registration and packet pickup areas; set up all signs so that route is clearly marked; set up water stations along course; announce 30, 15, and 10 minutes before race start; call runners to the starting line and make pre-announcements

Alumni Auction

Both silent and live auctions are a great way to raise money for organizations, and there are advantages to both. A silent auction poses the advantage of being conducted quietly. This allows for other activities to be carried out simultaneously, such as guest speakers or conversation among guests. A live auction, however, tends to bring in bids twice as high as silent auctions, as there is more excitement involved in bidders competing out loud (Bray, 2008). For the purpose of generating the largest amount of funds, this proposed event focuses on hosting a live auction.

University Singers has a large alumni base and I think it would be great to invite all of the alumni back for an auction of University Singers memorabilia. The University Singers office and wardrobe storage room are full of and one-of-a-kind Singers items that our organization no longer has use for. Some of the items that could be sold include old scrapbooks, records, DVDs

of performances, costumes, banners, trophies and plaques, and cast photos. These items are sure to bring in good money from the alumni who hold them near and dear to their hearts, and would also provide University Singers more room for new costume pieces and storage.

Ideally, this event would be held after one of University Singers' annual concerts on Ball State's campus, such as our fall concert, winter cabaret, or spring Spectacular. This event could be even more profitable if included as part of an alumni weekend package for an upcoming reunion such as the 55th or 60th year of the organization, which is likely to bring in a larger crowd than just an annual concert performance. The auction could be held at the Ball State University Alumni Center, as this facility can be used free of charge for alumni events (Using Alumni Center, 2016) and could be paired with a dinner, or drinks and appetizers. Incorporating a moneymaking activity, such as an auction, with a dinner is a sure way to boost an event's fundraising potential, as it allows an organization to charge more for tickets to the event (Bray, 2008). All items up for auction would be displayed at the front of the room. After the meal finishes up (or while drinks and appetizers are being served), items would begin to be auctioned off. Current cast members would assist the auctioneer by parading items up for bidding.

Budget of Expenses

This budget was created under the assumption that 100 alumni would attend the event. Resources and contact information for hosting an alumni auction at Ball State University can be found in Appendix B.

Item	Amount Needed	Unit Price	Total
Renting Assembly Hall of Alumni Center	1 evening	\$0	\$0
University Catering dinner (plus 10% tax)	100	\$20	\$2,000
Tax on food/services	1	10% of total	\$200
Auctioneer	3 hours	\$150/hour*	\$450
Invitations (plus postage)	1,000	\$0.59	\$588.05

*Cost of a live auctioneer varies greatly. Some auctioneers charge by the hour, as shown in the above budget. Others charge a flat rate for the event, or charge a commission (Brandly, 2011).

Assuming that tickets are pre-sold for this event at \$25/a person, and University Catering is only \$20/a person, the organization will make a \$5 profit on every individual that attends the event, regardless of whether or not they bid on an item. Given the above budget, tickets for 100 attendees would cover the cost of University Catering as well as the auctioneer, only leaving the organization to cover the cost of invitations to the event. If 100 items are auctioned off with a minimum bid of \$20, the organization will gather \$2,000. After covering the cost of invitations, a total of nearly \$1,500 could be expected in profit.

Timeline

Six months prior to event: Book Assembly Hall in the Alumni Center for event; book University Catering for event

Three months prior to event: Send out invitations to alumni; contract auctioneer for event

Two months prior to event: Organize items and decide on starting bid; stay in contact with auctioneer about event details

Two weeks prior to event: Send out reminder email to all alumni that have RSVP'd for event and increase hype by describing specific items up for bid; touch base with University

Catering to ensure everything is in order for event

One week prior to event: Ensure that all current cast members helping with auction are informed of their duties during the event

Day of event: Arrange items for auction

Cast Chili Cook-Off

Coming from a community that pairs the majority of its performances with food, I believe that dinners are one of the most effective fundraisers for organizations. Having watched my parents help organize many of these dinners, I know that they take very little work and can bring in a big profit.

Hosting a Cast Chili Cook-Off would be a fun and effective way to get the entire University Singers cast involved in fundraising efforts. Cast members could pair-up (or group-up) to create their own pot of chili in a crockpot for the event. Being that the University requires that on-campus events use University Catering, the event would likely need to be held at a church or other community center in the area. The event should be advertised throughout the city, as well as on-campus and through social media. A \$5 entrance fee could be charged for “all-you-can-eat chili.” To add to the event, ask companies to donate sides for the dinner (i.e. Panera donating bread, Insomnia Cookies donating cookies).

To add a little bit of fun to the event, number each crockpot and have people vote on their favorite pot of chili. Simple prizes could be awarded to the winners such as plaques, trophies, aprons, ladles or soup spoons. To increase event turnout, this event could be paired with cabaret style entertainment put on by the University Singers, as long as the venue is equipped to support their sound system and equipment.

Budget of Expenses

A list of resources corresponding to this budget can be found in Appendix C.

Item	Amount Needed	Unit Price	Total
Venue	1	\$100	\$100
Advertising	100	\$0.35	\$35
Awards	3*	\$7	\$21

*Amount will vary depending on number of awards chosen to give out.

Conclusion

University Singers, like many organizations, must find the means to address the expanding gap in funding for their organization. The fundraising ideas presented in this thesis are only a handful of opportunities that organizations have to generate more income for themselves. However, the process of financially supporting an organization is never-ending. The needs and resources available to organizations are constantly changing, and these groups must continue to find new ways to get others to help financially support their organization.

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Appendix A
Resources for Hosting a Race

Ordering medals and plaques

- Crown Awards (www.crownawards.com)
- Champion Awards & Trophies (702 S Tillotson Ave
Muncie, IN 47304; 765-286-0926)

Ordering t-shirts

- Outfitters (1800 North Wheeling Avenue, Muncie, IN 47303; 765-289-6456)

Race certification

- USA Track & Field (www.usatf.org)

Event insurance

- ESportsInsurance.com (kandkinsurance.com)

Traffic control

- University Police Department (765-285-1111)

Medical presence

- IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital medical staff office (765-747-3030)

Race bibs

- Road ID (www.roadid.com)
- Rainbow Racing (www.rainbowracing.com)

Scheduling event on Ball State University's campus

- Ball State University Conference Services department (765-285-1396 or
conferences@bsu.edu)

Advertising (fliers, handouts, etc.)

- U Printing (www.uprinting.com)
- Print 24 (Printing24.com)

Event signs

- Archer Marketing (www.archermarketing.net)
- Esigns.com (www.esigns.com)

Appendix B
Resources for Hosting an Alumni Auction

Invitations for event

- U Printing (www.uprinting.com)

Catering

- University Catering (765-285-3500 or bkimes@bsu.edu)
 - Full menu options can be found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/www/departamentalcontent/dining/pdfs/catering%20menu%20jan%202016.pdf?la=en>

Booking Alumni Center

- Sue Taylor, Director of Reunions and Affinity Programs (765-285-1409 or suetaylor@bsu.edu)

Appendix C
Resources for Cast Chili Cook-Off

Venue

- Kennedy Library (1700 W McGalliard Rd, Muncie, IN 47304; 765-747-8209)
- Horizon Convention Center (401 S High St, Muncie, IN 47305; 888-288-8860)

Advertising

- U Printing (www.uprinting.com)
- Print 24 (Printing24.com)

Awards

- Crown Awards (www.crownawards.com)
- Champion Awards & Trophies (702 S Tillotson Ave
Muncie, IN 47304; 765-286-0926)